ZX SPECTRUM GAMER

ISSUE 5
APR 2018
FREE



BUMPER NEW FORMAT ISSUE!

AEON

EXCLUSIVE NEW GAME FREE WITH THIS ISSUE!

REVIEWED

- SCUBA DIVE
- GANDALF
- ANTICS
- BOBBY CARROT
- LUNA CRABS

AND MORE!

NO COVER TAPE?

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MORE CONTENT!
LESS CALORIES!

MORE EXCITING THAN SLIDING NAKED DOWN A GIANT CHEESEGRATER

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ISSUE 5 APRIL 2018
ZX SPECTRUM GAMER



EDITORIAL

Greetings humans.

You might have noticed that I've shifted the furniture around a bit for this issue, so welcome to the new look ZX Spectrum Gamer.

I decided to expand the reviews a in both quantity and also content, looking at new releases because all that effort deserves as much exposure as it can get. Homebrew is what keeps the Spectrum alive. Hopefully, by the time next issue comes around, the Spectrum Next will be out, so exciting times are ahead.

This issue marks the first to feature a cover tape. Well, it's not exactly a cover tape but you get the idea. Will every issue going forward feature a new free game? Possibly, but possibly not, so enjoy it while you can.

Thanks for reading.

Paul

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

Rating systems are kind of rubbish when you think about them, so I got rid of it. Instead, just read the flippin' text.

There is a short verdict for those in a hurry though.

Sunteam
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AEON

AN EPIC ACTION ADVENTURE ACROSS GENERATIONS



ZX Spectrum Gamer is very proud to present an epic free Spectrum game for you to enjoy! Why is it epic? Because I made it, that's why, so shut up.

Aeon is a science fiction spectacular which, if it were turned into a novel, would sell almost 2 copies. So you know you're in for a real treat here.

It's a game so far reaching in scope, a physical release would be the Bandersnatch of the 21st Century. I'm not sure if that's a good thing.

Aeon comes on 9 (count 'em) TAP files, containing story sequences and four unique games. If using emulation, it is recommended that you load the story tapes (the odd numbered ones) with fast loading disabled, otherwise you'll have to be a VERY fast reader. The games themselves can be loaded at super speed, although you'll miss a bit of blurb on each loading screen.

Each game can be controlled by keyboard, Kempston or Sinclair - selectable on the title screen. Controls vary per game but they're so simple, even an arthritic hamster could get to grips with them.

But don't be complacent, as they will provide a serious challenge to the most seasoned gamer. Or they might not. It's really hard to tell.

Of course, if you get really stuck, you can just cheat and load the next part as there are no passwords. But don't tell anyone I told you that.

Aeon marks a milestone in the quality of cover games in ZX Spectrum Gamer, because it's the only one. There will be more, but don't get too excited as they'll probably be a bit naff in comparison.

So get loading, get playing, and get learning the history of Aeon and the Goldenstark family.

Download from sunteam.co.uk/zxgamer

Aeon ©2018 Sunteam. Game design, graphics and programming by Paul Weller.
AY Music by Sergey Letyagin AKA Ghostsoft, from zxtunes.com.
Made mostly in Jonathan Cauldwell's Aracde Game Designer.



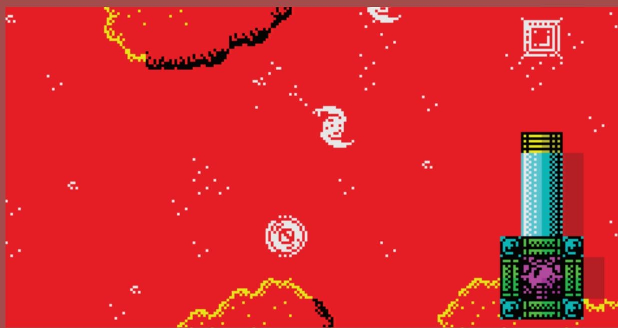
Game 1

Traverse the surface of the planet to discover the source of strange signals. Your heavy spacesuit makes jumping difficult, so timing is essential to avoid the alien life forms.



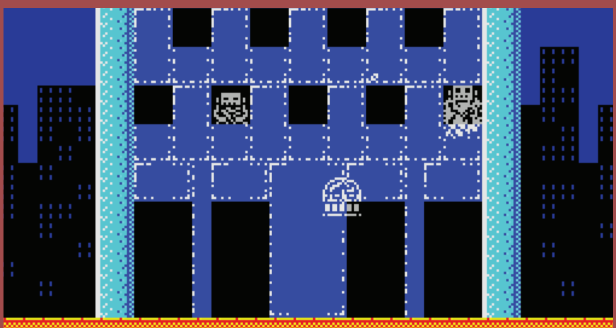
Game 2

Drive your vehicle around the landscape and reach all the survey locations. Beware the natural dust storms and power couplings that will damage your craft on contact.



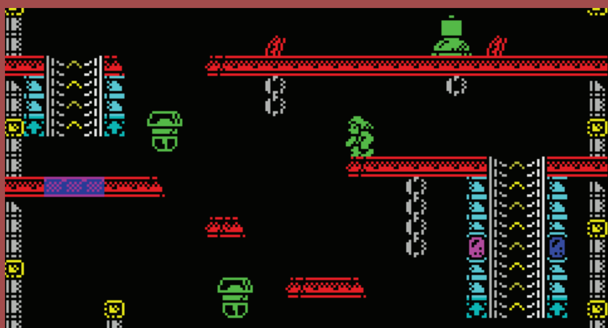
Game 3

Use your slow hovver-pod to ascend the towers - keep an eye out for the connection points to install satellite dishes, but watch for the robots dumping their construction garbage.



Game 4

Escape the planet through the derelict buildings that are now overrun by masses of malfunctioning droids. Use the one-way gravity chutes but watch where you're going!



SCUBA DIVE

PUBLISHER: DURELL • **YEAR:** 1983 • **MEMORY:** 48K

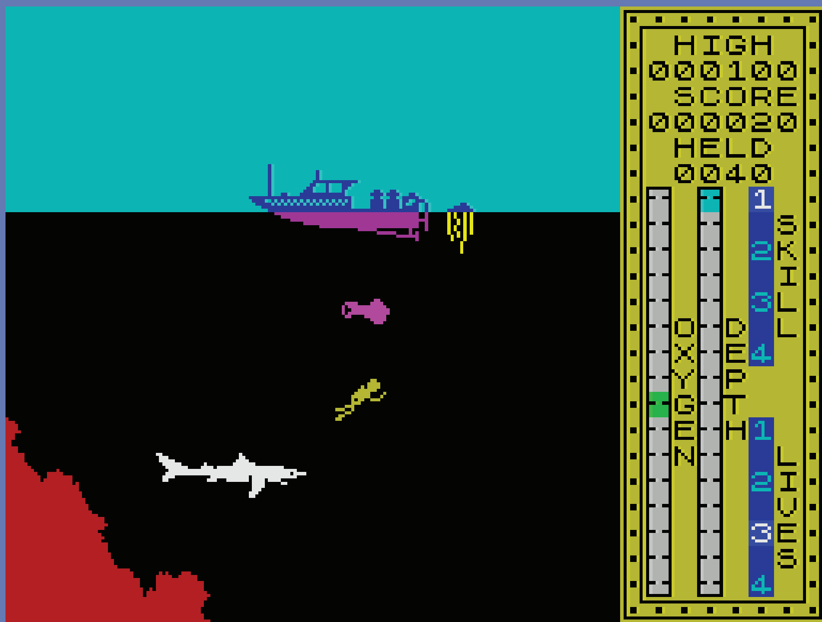
If there's one thing I know about divers, it's that they love a massive clam.

That's right. Don't let them fool you into thinking they're doing 'important oceanic research' or anything. They just want to find a clam, shove their hand right in and profit. If you're lucky, they might handle a couple of jellyfish in the vicinity to make themselves look like they don't have a single-track mind, but when it comes down to it, it's all about the clam.

And so we come to Scuba Dive (not Scuba Dave as I initially mistyped, although he could be called Dave for all I know. There's nothing wrong with that), probably the world's first pearl thief simulator. Released by Durell in 1983, this is a game written by Mike Richardson, which is generally a good sign as I've not yet played a game of his that I've disliked.



Scuba Dive does exactly what it says on the tin. You start off in a little boat full of little people and quickly dump yourself over the side into the busy waters below. Using rotational controls, you have to swim your way to the bottom and grab the pearly treasures from the gaping mouths of the assorted bivalve molluscs. This is as easy as swimming over them until you hear a little 'blip', but care must be taken as if you bash into the surrounding rocks you'll drop everything you collected so far. The only way to be safe is to swim back up to the boat and offload them, then leap back in the water for some more (hoping that your companions don't ditch you and go and have a knees-up somewhere else).



I'm sure they never had these problems filming Blue Planet...make sure to drop off your 'held' loot at the boat, otherwise you'll end up dropping it in the ocean and it will be lost forever, along with any chance of affording that big screen TV.

The sea is positively thriving, with all manner of fish, squid, jellies and sharks going about their business. Keep away and they'll do you no harm, but just a tiny touch is enough to make you pop like a balloon (I'm not quite sure this is an accurate representation of real life at this point). But never fear - for another of your diving buddies is quick to leap off the ship to collect more loot, not even stopping to remember the life of his fallen comrade.

So this is how it goes... until you explore enough to encounter a giant octopus, flailing its tentacles around over a gap in the rocky ocean floor. If you are skilful enough to slip past it, you're rewarded by massive clams that contain extra valuable pearls, but can also stun

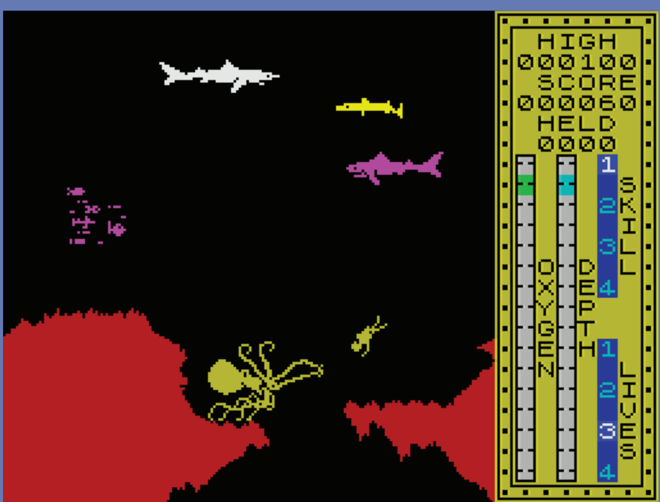
you if they clamp shut while you're rooting around inside.

A further octo-guardian will reveal the deepest part of the ocean, consisting of a network of caverns with treasure chests rammed to the top with, well, treasure. Of course, while all this is happening, your oxygen is gradually running out. Luckily, there are some old air tanks just lying around (probably the long forgotten remains of an old Bond action scene) and this can help top you up.
Scuba Dive reminds me of one of those push-your-luck dice or card games. The deeper you explore and the more you collect, the more risk there is of losing it all with one silly mistake, and it's this aspect which generates some of the excitement when playing. It's a case of 'Shall I collect just one more pearl...argh, I bashed my head and dropped everything!"

Being an early game, it's graphically quite simple. But at the same time it does look really nice due to the exceptional quality of the animation. All the sea life is beautifully drawn and moves fluidly, making this quite a treat to look at. A few extra touches like bubbles would have been nice, but the screen gets full of beasties at times that cause some slowdown, so any more visual fluff would make gameplay suffer.

Sadly, the sound is less than impressive, with just a few little beeps here and there. I guess that the intention is to generate and atmosphere of calmness and stark loneliness as you sink into the dark waters below. Or something.

Scuba Dive is a game I owned way back in my early Spectrum years so I have a bias towards it. Playing it again, at first it seemed a bit samey, but once I was bold enough to adventure past that bloody octopus (good timing and skill is needed) and actually care about my final score, the game becomes more compelling. It's well designed, doesn't try and do more than it should and is certainly a challenge for those who wish to push themselves. Or you can just flap around in the shallows until you get bored, it's entirely up to you.



Hello Beastie: Unless you want to be felt up by this big tickler, you'd better practice those rotational controls with care.

THE MAGS

CRASH
"Highly recommended and excellent value for money" 92%

YOUR SPECTRUM
"...frustrating, exasperating and totally addictive"

SINCLAIR USER
"...an impressive and original game" 9/10

VERDICT

Although less engaging than on release, Scuba Dive is certainly still worth playing for any budding Jacques Cousteau types out there. Bloop!

Clams and Lambs



Clams and lambs can be easily confused for each other. Here is a handy guide to help you learn which is which.

- Unlike lambs, clams don't have a brain.
- Giant clams cannot move from their location on coral reefs, due to regular bouts of nihilism. Lambs are generally happier, hence all the prancing around.
- Clams live upside-down in the sand, where lambs generally live right-side-up on the surface of the Earth.
- Clams have neither eyes, ears or noses. Actually the same is true for lambs, but these are routinely painted on after birth so as not to scare the children.



LUNA CRABS

PUBLISHER: MICROMEGA • **YEAR:** 1983 • **MEMORY:** 16K

Poor Matt Damon had to put up with a lot when he was stranded on Mars: violent storms, stinky spuds, intense loneliness and potatoes. But one thing he didn't have was crabs. Giant angry space crabs.

Such is the predicament that you find yourself in - as part of the Solar System Resources Research Team, you've nipped off to one of Saturn's moons in search of precious minerals. After taking a little jolly in your crawler, your sensors start to pick up life forms near your lander craft. So doing your best Bill Paxton impression (we miss you Bill) and fearing the worst, you stick it in high gear and head back.

To be honest, space crabs were probably the last thing you expected, but as they scuttle towards you, vomiting acid at your vehicle, you are forced to take control of the cannon and make preparations for what will become a very tasty bisque.

The controls are very simple, with left and right movement only. As you fire your cannon, the 'guided photon bolt' follows your horizontal position which is both a blessing and a curse sometimes. It certainly adds an extra layer of skill to what is essentially a Space Invaders variant, as you try to aim and dodge simultaneously. If you get any of the nasty green crustacean spittle on you, you'll lose a life.

Once you clear the area of crabs, you get a bonus and win the game. Wait, no you don't! You just start it all again on a new level. More crabs. More bile. More panic.

Being an early 16K game, Luna Crabs is obviously going to suffer some issues. Technically it's pretty good, with responsive controls and a decent speed, even with a lot of action on the screen. Sound effects are suitably arcade-like, adding to the experience. The enemy crabs are little buggers, intent on scrabbling away just as your shot is about to make contact, but that's part of the skill of the game.

The main issue of Luna Crabs is longevity. After a couple of goes, you're pretty much done, unless you're a real score hound who must better themselves at every turn. Despite this, it certainly worth taking a few minutes to have a quick, uncomplicated blast. Unless you're an Ostraconophobiac of course, in which case the trauma will probably kill you.



Crab people, crab people, taste like crab, talk like people...

THE MAGS

CRASH
"Playable, but not very addictive." 61½%

ZX COMPUTING
"..an enjoyable and surprisingly addictive game to play."

HOME COMPUTING WEEKLY
"The graphics really are excellent..." 5/5

VERDICT

It may be lacking in longevity, but Luna Crabs is fun enough for at least a couple of sessions.

SAVING KONG

NEW GAME

DEVELOPER: GABRIELE AMORE • **MEMORY:** 48K/128K



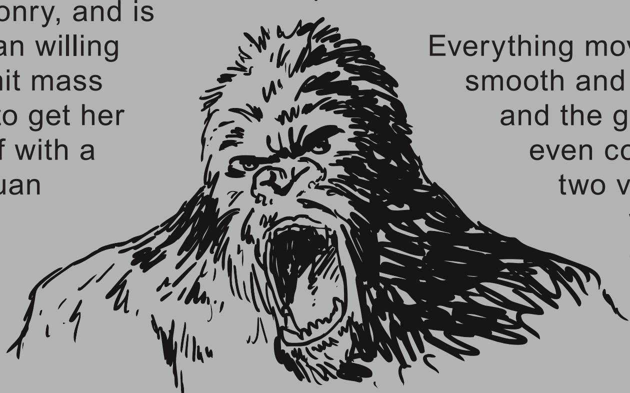
Your ascent begins. Get used to slipping, you'll do it a lot.

Saving Kong is the sequel to Crazy Kong City, Gabriele Amoure's colourful platform game, although this one takes a different approach.

After being rescued by Mario, busty Helen Blond begins to wonder if he is really her true love. After all, he's a bit fat, half as tall as she is and reeks of 'that which is flushed and forgotten'.

Being a gal who's really into muscles, hair and bestiality, she releases Kong and vows to protect the beast as their love blooms.

Despite being quite obviously mental, she's also packing a fair bit of weaponry, and is more than willing to commit mass murder to get her rocks off with a gargantuan primate.



So the gameplay itself is refreshingly different than the usual fare - as Kong slowly climbs the skyscraper, you have to move your target around the screen, shooting all the planes, soldiers and other obstacles that stand in your way. If Kong gets hit, he slips down the building and if he loses all his lives, you both plummet to the ground.

During the climb, you'll find extra hearts and ammunition dropping down, so be quick and roll your crosshairs over them before it's too late.

The game has a nice colourful look to it, although the Kong sprite is a bit weird when you really look closely at it - a by-product of fitting it into those pesky 8x8 attribute squares.

Everything moves smooth and fast, and the game even comes in two versions with different 128K music tracks by David Saphier, although there is certainly enough audio to satisfy even with just the beeper.

Saving Kong can get surprisingly challenging, but does suffer from the frustration of 2 steps forward, 1 step back gameplay which can annoy a little. There's a bit of graphical glitching here and there and your crosshair tends to get easily lost around Kong which is a mild inconvenience. Presentation is generally great, but you're unlikely to stick with this for more than one session.



A few screens up and even the bloody weather starts to attack you.

VERDICT

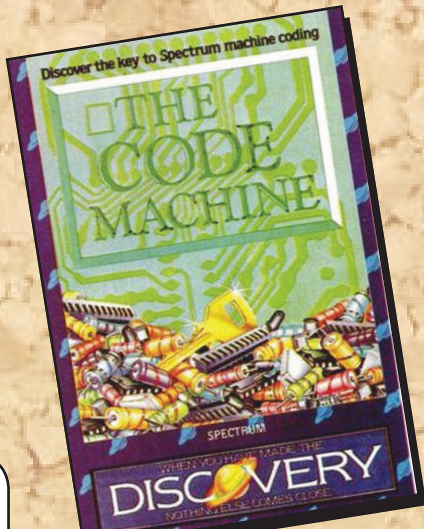
Nice to see a different kind of game, but after a couple of goes, you're done with it.

THE GALLERY

featuring guest presenter, wacky inventor Wilf Lunn.



Ey up. Simon Brontosaurus from Thatcham has sent in this curious, but colourful painting of a Code Machine. Of course, it's not as good as my linear machine, which made so much linear it exploded!



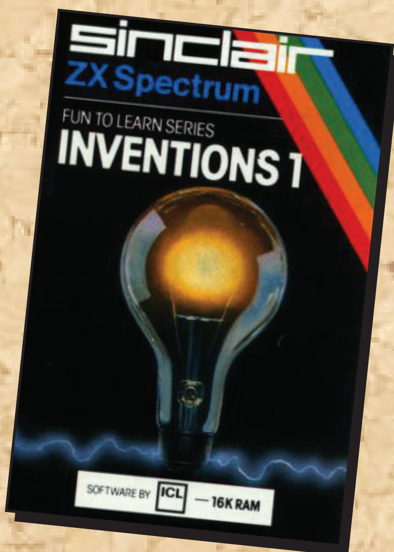


Flippin 'eck, these races are as Wacky as I am! A nicely rendered cartoon image from Abigail Smoot in Scunthorpe. Of course, if I was in a race like this, I'd wear my owl scaring hat, just in case I was attacked by owls!





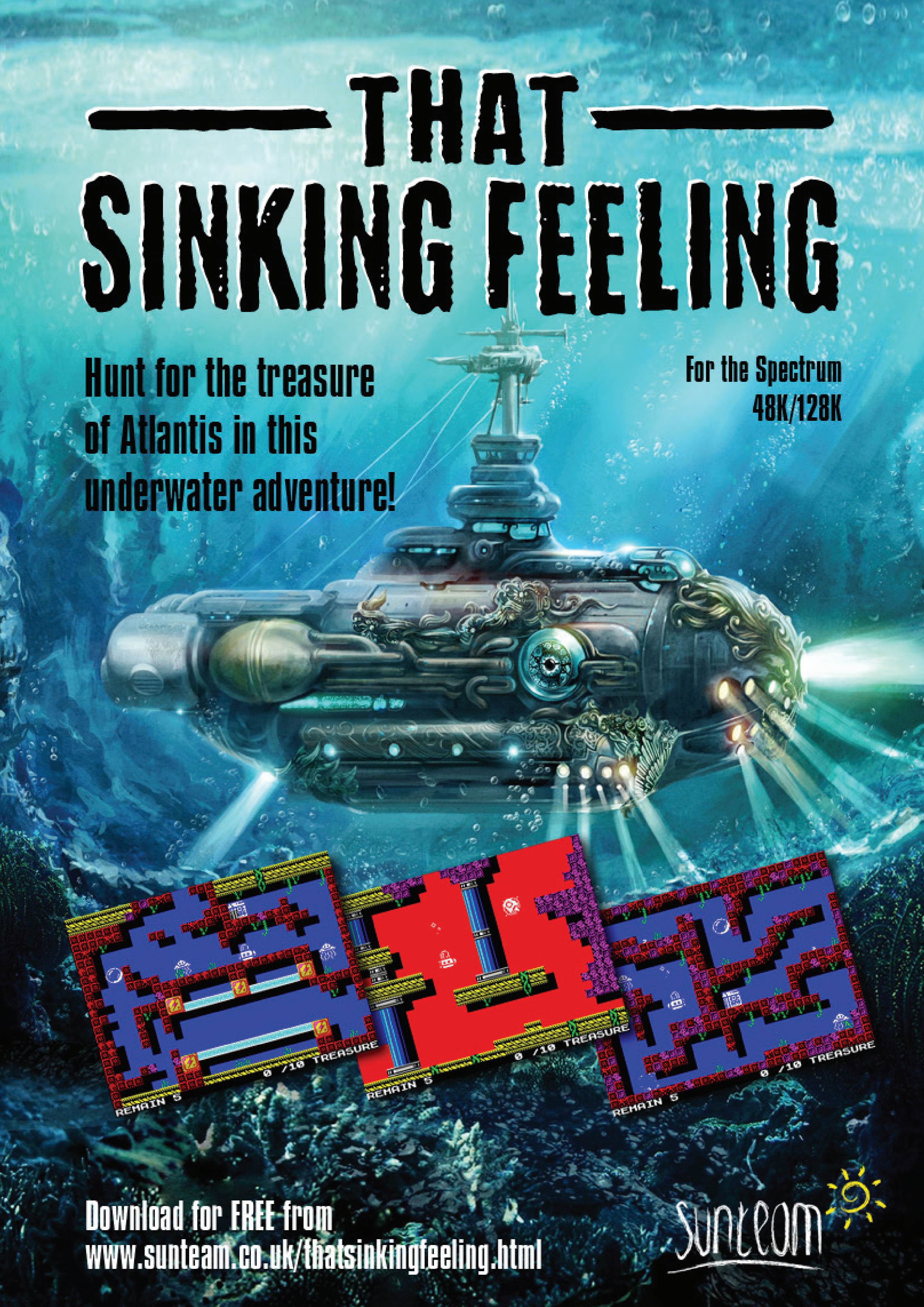
Well ecky thump. This is right up my street. Inventions are what I do and this entry from Caleb Marigold in Leamington Spa is a beautiful rendering of one of history's finest inventions. You know I once invented a device that attached a light bulb to my diddler, so every morning my 'gentleman's flourish' would light my way to the bathroom!





Eeh by gum. What is this monstrosity from Jennifer Smith of Ledbury. It's lucky that I invented an automatic clockwork machine that pokes my own eyeballs out and replaces them with a gherkin and a toad because I think I'm going to need it!




THAT
SINKING FEELING
Hunt for the treasure of Atlantis in this underwater adventure!
For the Spectrum 48K/128K
0 /10 TREASURE
REMAIN 5
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REMAIN 5
Download for FREE from
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ZXOMBIES: DEAD FLESH

DEVELOPER: CATWEAZLE • **MEMORY:** 48K/128K

NEW GAME



Gun go bang. Barrel go boom. Zombies go urgle.

Major Derring has a bit of a problem. Firstly, he's a sort of rubbish Major as his squad is all dead. Good job guy. Secondly, night is about to fall and hordes of shambling zombies are flailing all around the streets like it's Mardi Gras.

Dragging himself out from under a pile of rubble and probably giving himself a high five for being the only survivor, he hears a shout from a nearby building. A citizen in need!

He remembers an old fort to the east of his location and calculates in his head... yes, that would be a great place to make a stand until help arrives, and he can lead the remaining civilians there. Of course, it probably didn't enter his mind that they would make perfect zombie bait if he ever got cornered. And so your adventure begins.

Dotted around the map are safe zones containing witless members of public that, upon pressing the action key, will follow you closely. Escorting them is a long and very stressful exercise, being that on every screen there are hordes of zombies emerging from the ground.

The zombies come in a variety of flavours - your common or garden shambling doofus, tentacle legs, and what I like to call the muscle bound fast running bastard (otherwise known as the Brute).

But is that all you ask? And well you might, for there is also the added challenge of locked gates that must be opened by pulling a lever... which takes time... while zombies are approaching.

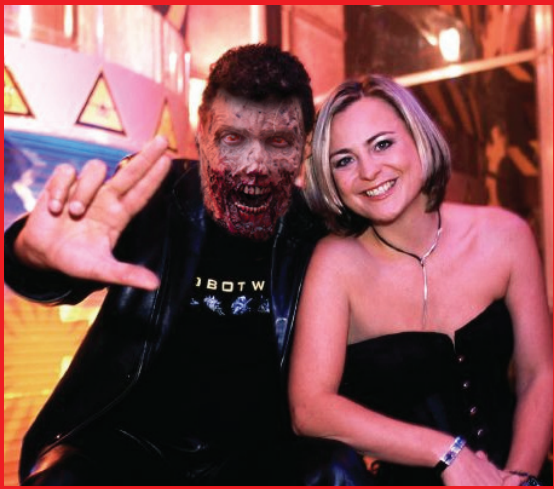
But it's not all bad news. You have a pistol with a few measly shots (and a time delay for reloading), but along the way you can pick up machine guns or explosives (but be careful not to blow yourself up as I have done several times). There are also barrels which are explosive. Of course there are. There are ALWAYS barrels.

This is a pretty tough game and because of the way the map is designed, it's quite a long play as you backtrack



Locked gates require switches to open them. Not easy when you've got a complete rugby team charging at you the whole time. Time to retreat, methinks.

Surviving a Zombie Attack *with Phillipa Forrester*



Hi there, I'm TV's Phillipa Forrester and I'm here to give you some cracking advice on what to do if zombies come lurching up your street. The most important thing to is try to avoid combat at all costs, so your preliminary defence should be to distract the approaching zombie, most effectively by hurling a rusty cleat or pumpernickel in the opposite direction. This works in most cases, and I know because I used to present Tomorrow's World and talk about sciencing and things.

If you find the zombie has reached your location, you can then move on to the next stage. I used to be on Robot Wars you know. Now, zombies are generally a bit stupid in the head, so you can slow their approach by making them puzzled. I found that presenting them with an unfinished jigsaw will do the trick nine times out of ten. Even better if you remove a few pieces from the box so they can't actually finish it! I was great in Robot Wars. Much better than than young, ginger bit of flesh they replaced me with in the reboot.

Uh, so if the jigsaw fails to work, then just release Sergeant Bash or Sir Killalot to finish the job! I mean, they could have asked me back, I'm still pretty aren't I? Tell me I'm pretty! Look at me! DON'T LOOK AT ME!

from start to finish with your rescuees in tow. I personally would have liked to see the whole map blocked into areas that open up as you escort people to each check point, as the running to and fro can get a little tiring.

While you can run and hope for the best, this only is effective so many times - clearing a room provides a brief respite when you next return, but generally more and harder zombies are just increasing your stress levels. In most rooms this is OK but there have been times where it's distinctly unfair, with a locked room and a lot of Brutes running right at you.



Rescued survivors stand around gabbing as you contemplate putting a bullet into their skulls.

Graphically, the game is functional if not overly stylish. The backgrounds do their job but the screen can get a little messy with pixels at times. It kind of resembles a Mastertronic game from way back.

It's nice to have 128K music playing while you battle - the sound is a little rough and scratchy but that matches the feel of the game quite well.

I certainly enjoyed myself while playing this, although after a while the long journey to gather the civilians becomes a bit of a trudge and an ultimately hopeless goal. After all, we know the zombies will win. They always do.

VERDICT

A fun but overlong zombie shooter that could benefit from a few design tweaks.

NEW GAME

GANDALF

DEVELOPERS: CRISTIÁN GONZÁLEZ, ALVIN ALBRECHT • **MEMORY:** 128K

You'd think that after the destruction of The One Ring and the defeat of Sauron, Middle-Earth would finally be at peace. Alas, there still remains a stain on the world - leftover demons from a time when the evil of Melkor was widespread.

In a quest that Tolkien seems to have absent-mindedly omitted from the appendices in The Lord of The Rings, Gandalf decides to set forth one last time to destroy these demons and bring true peace to the world. And this time he's got his fireballs loaded and ready for action.

Gandalf (the game) is a cute and very colourful platformer with light RPG undertones. It consists of four rounds, each set in a specific locale (such as The Shire or the Mines of Moria), and you have to traverse the map and defeat the boss.



Cave-shrooms and bags of gold. Sounds like a party to me.

Gandalf (the wizard) has become a sprightly little chap in his old age (obviously due to smoking some of that extra strength pipe-weed) and can now leap quite high and zap enemies with balls of fire.

Throughout the levels, you can collect sacks of money for points and general XP, along with other items that can increase your strength, magical power and health. All very handy indeed, especially as your manna decreases every time you take a pot shot at a beastie. Some items are just laying about whereas others require the kind of head-on-block action that will get Shigeru Miyamoto phoning his lawyers.



Just look at the pretty colours! The flag marks a handy restart point, and the crystal ball and helmet in the cave below give stat bonuses that may come in very useful.

Also along the way are strewn various coloured keys that can open, you guessed it, coloured doors, as well as a whole bunch of ne'er-do-wells such as orcs, spawns of Ungoliant and (presumably drunk) axe-throwing dwarves.

Now while all this amounts to something

Gandalf's Magical Skills

Wizarding is rather a subtle thing in Middle-Earth, but literary Gandalf did manage a few eye-openers.

- *Magical Fireworks.* His speciality, he created huge sparkly dragons in the sky to amuse the simple locals.
- *Explosive Death.* Rarely one to use magic offensively, he did strike down a goblin tea party in their caves once.
- *Walking Flashlight.* Not the most grand of skills, but it has its uses for sure.
- *Wingardium Leviosa.* For blowing wind up Galadriel's dress when nobody is looking. Also, his patronus is a Brundlefly.



With a minimum of practice, the platforming isn't greatly challenging, especially after dispatching these nasty bats with a few balls (of fire) in the face.

that is unlikely to be approved by the Tolkien Estate, it does happen to be bloody good fun to play in a kind of shonky Mario-meets-Wonderboy-In-Monster-Land type way.

It's certainly very colourful to look at, with great use of the Nirvana+ engine and this more than makes up for the simplicity of the visual design (and the odd appearance of volcanoes in The Shire). The control, however, does take a little getting used to.

Your plucky little wizard sprite does tend to jerk and wobble a little clumsily. I'd make a safe bet that this is to avoid colour clash but it does feel a tad unprecise at first, particularly when positioning yourself for jumps. But once you're over this initial hurdle, you really get into the flow of the game.



Audio consists of a nice rendition of the theme from the movies at the start, along with a couple of jingles in game. It's a bit of a shame there isn't any music playing during the actual game itself, but the AY sound effects are actually plentiful and arcadey so you really don't mind anyway.



Moria is a dark and dangerous place. Best head-butt some rocks.

While the game gets very challenging (I'm struggling in Moria), its fun nature and great design does keep you addicted and coming back for more.

VERDICT

Truly Gandalf of Many Colours - and probably the best new title I've played this year.

HAIKU CORNER



Gandalf stares forward.
Is he contemplating life?
No. He is just stoned.



Bobby is happy.
But in twenty five minutes,
He'll be run over.

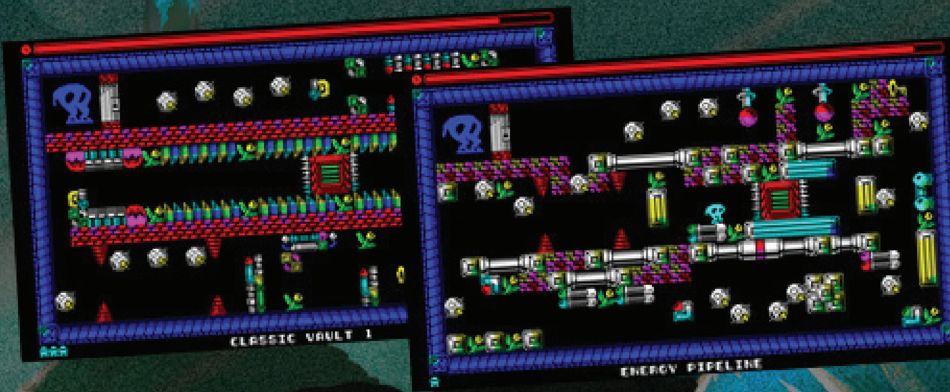


He loved the ocean,
Now he's trapped and in danger.
That clam is a dick.

SOFTWARE THAT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD

HORACE IN THE MEGA VAULT

Help Horace in his quest to rescue his father and escape the vault in this challenging dodge 'em game against the clock.



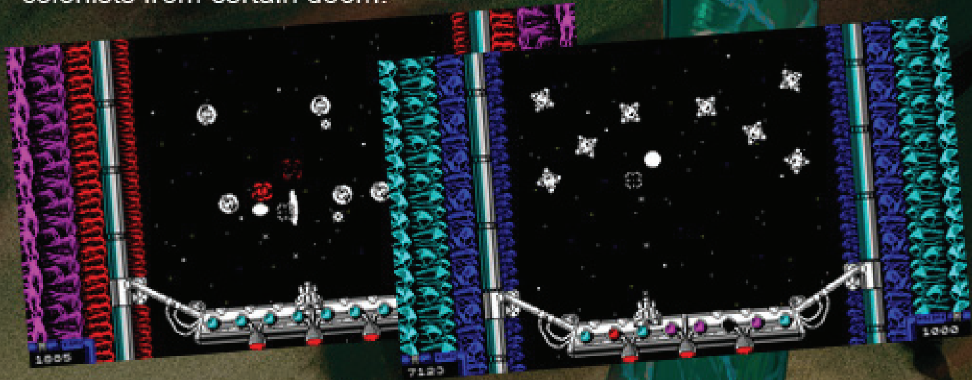


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Sunteam

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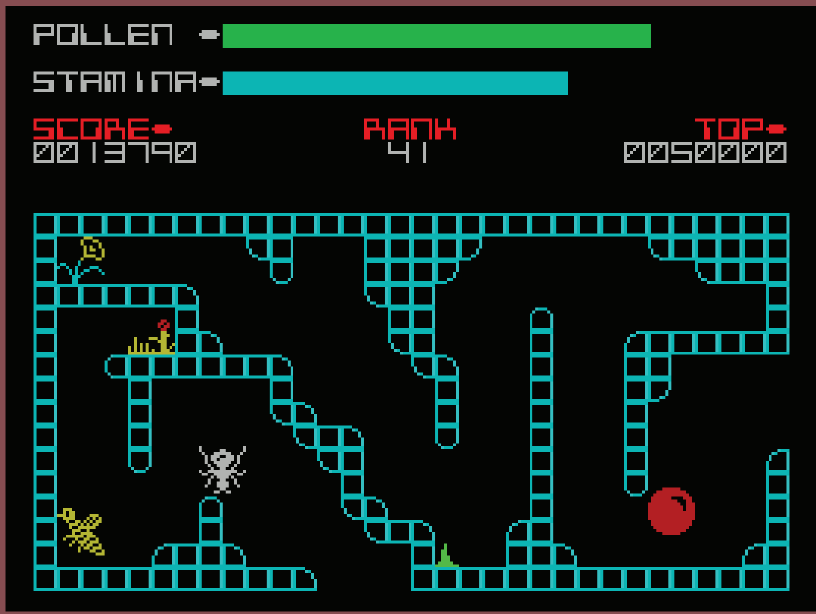
ANTICS

PUBLISHER: BUG BYTE • **YEAR:** 1984 • **MEMORY:** 48K

When I was quite young, I got an Adam Ant LP. I wasn't actually a fan of the music, but I thought he just looked really cool with that white strip across his face. I don't think I listened to it that much.

All this has practically nothing to do with Antics, the sequel to 'The Birds and the Bees', a game which I admit to never having experienced.

You play as the 'hilariously' named Barnabee who has to infiltrate the complex maze of an ants' nest to rescue Boris (a less cleverly titled bee) and lead him back to safety. You know, kind of like the original Star Wars, but with less lasers and princesses and more hymenopterans.



While the level layouts are quite complex and clever, the graphics sometimes leave a little to be desired, such as this screen which looks bizarrely like the ant's nest has been transported inside the world of Tron.

The nest is fiendishly built out of 32 screens and is crawling with crawling things like ladybirds, centipedes and (not surprisingly) ants. There are also thorns that will give you a nasty sting if you run into them and if that's not bad enough, your stamina is constantly wearing down. Luckily, a few colourful flowers are also growing underground and landing on these can increase your stamina gauge and your pollen meter (which also gets sapped by those pesky ants).

You may find yourself coming to a dead end more than once, but do not fear! Some walls are so terrified of your mighty bee presence that they disintegrate on touch, whereas others open up after certain flowers are collected. If you finally make it to Boris, you'll need a good sense of direction as



Ladybirds knock you back on contact so be careful around them. Also, fearsome miniature ZX81s lurk within the depths of the maze, because reasons.

you have to lead his slow arse back to the surface to complete the game.

Antics isn't a particularly visually arresting game. The sprites are reasonably well drawn and move quite smoothly, but this is offset by the background graphics which are plain and often ugly, lacking in detail and using the simplest colour schemes. This is a shame as a little more visual creativity could have made a big difference and made the game look more polished.



Those spiky thorns can give you a nasty nip in the bum if you're not careful. Also, watch out for the wandering ants; attracted to the pollen, they will follow you and suck you dry, but not in a good way.

Sound consists of a few adequate effects and a beeper rendition of a famous piece of classical music that those in the know like to call 'that tune from Rollerball innit.' It hums along in the background while you play, which is nice. It also gets a little grating after a while, which is not. Thankfully the programmer has had the good grace to give us a button to turn it off.

At first I thought Antics was looking to be fairly rubbish. I began to warm to it a little once I started to draw a map of the game area, only to get a bit confused and just find a better one on Google. But by this time my interest was already beginning to wane.

It's not an easy game - while control is smooth, getting through some of the gaps in the walls can be a frustrating chore at times as you have to be pretty well lined up (and that's hard with gravity pulling on you constantly).

The bugs are also annoying as hell, especially the ants which just love to follow you around and munch on your pollen coated posterior.

There is some average level of fun to be had in learning the maze and its hidden passages. But as the average Joe might get bored before that happens, I would probably recommend one quick go, then a nosey at a pre-made map, then give it a couple of your best shots before forgetting about it forever.

THE MAGS

CRASH
"Original, playable and addictive excellent value and highly recommended." 90%

YOUR SPECTRUM
"A very addictive game that'll give hours of amusement"

SINCLAIR USER
"...an interesting maze game that does not suffer too much from sequel-mania..." 8/10

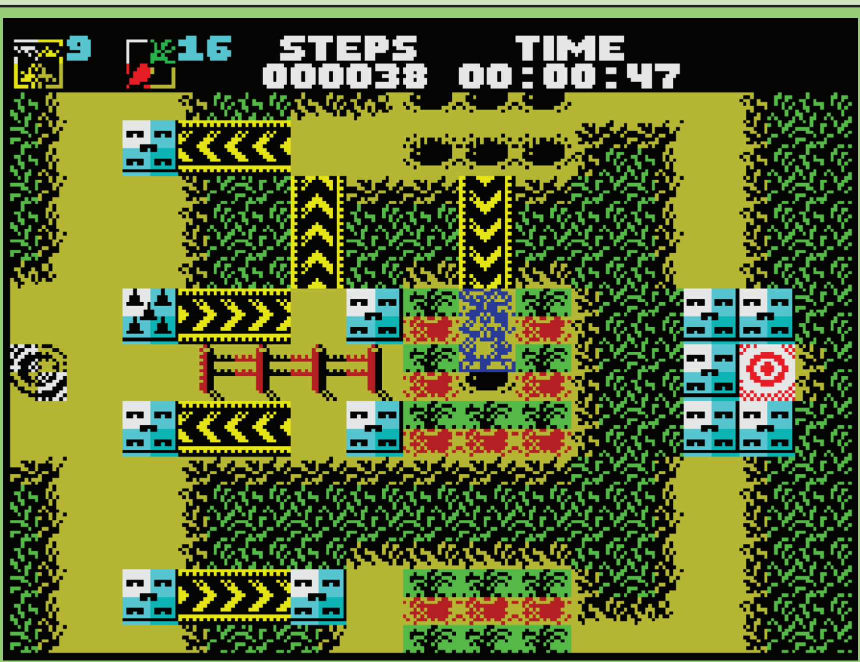
VERDICT

A basic map exploration game with a few neat touches. Worth giving it a bash even if you may move on to something else soon after.

BOBBY CARROT

DEVELOPER: COUVEJ • **MEMORY:** 48K/128K

NEW GAME



If farmers can afford a ton of spiked traps and conveyer belts, the carrot business must be more lucrative than I thought.

While most rabbits are content to go about their day munching on grass, eating their own poop or getting run over, Bobby seems to have his own agenda. It's all very enigmatic, but he obviously is trying to make some sort of political statement by devouring all the carrots from farmers' fields, therefore depriving them of their livelihood and bringing the whole system down. That, or he's just a greedy bast.



The game itself is a conversion (or more trendily a 'demake') of an ancient mobile phone title; one that went on to spawn several successful sequels.

At its heart, Bobby Carrot is a simple tile based puzzle game, which primarily involves you clearing the ground of all carrots before escaping into an ominous whirling red portal of doom (or something).

While there are no moving enemies to contend with, there are plenty of environmental hazards and puzzles to be figured out, and these get progressively more complex as the levels go on.

The main game is 30 levels long, but there is a secondary 20 level game where you have to place Easter eggs onto each hole to finish the stage - the challenge here being that you cannot walk over an egg once it is there.

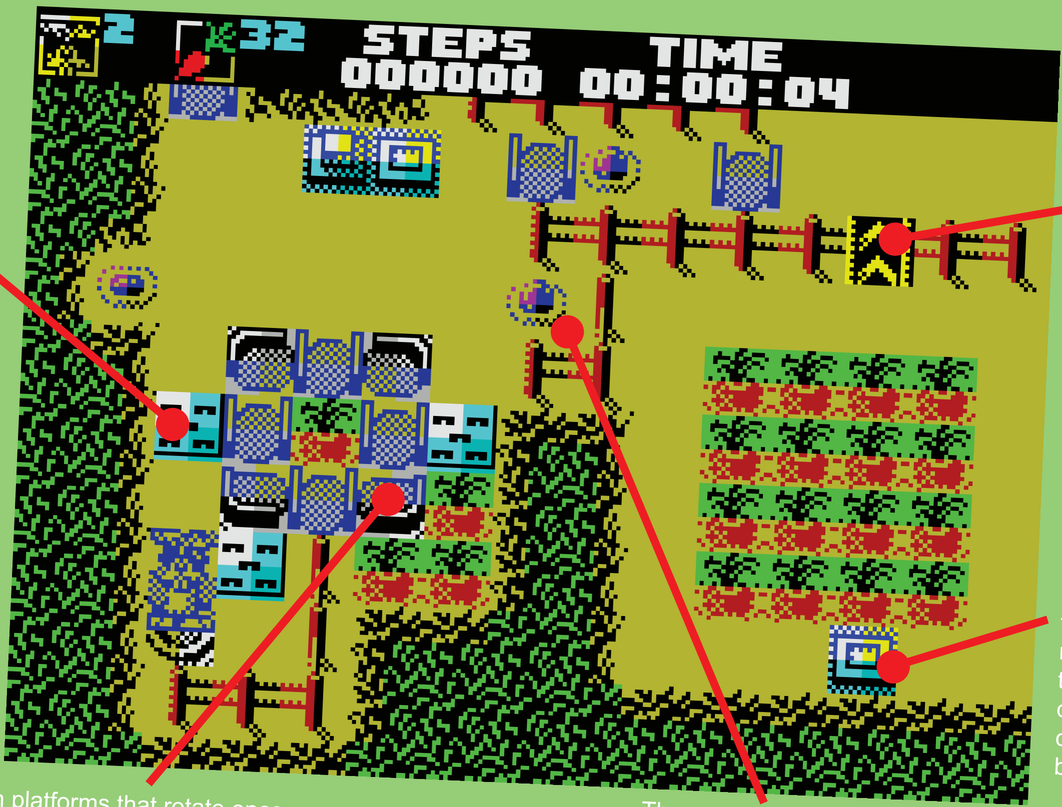
The game comes in both 48k and 128k versions, the difference being that the field of view on the 48k is drastically reduced (as is the sound which becomes the simple blips that you would typically expect).



Look, I'm only on screen 2 of the Easter Egg mode and I'm already beginning to eat my own face with frustration.

Can you fly, Bobby?

Sadly, rabbits can't fly (wouldn't that be great though?) so he has to contend with a multitude of ground based obstacles in his quest to nom.



These traps pop up a nasty set of spikes when walked over, making it a one way trip.

Conveyor belts allow movement in one direction only.

Nice chunky switches that reverse the direction of conveyor belts.

Fiendish platforms that rotate once you step off them. Headache inducing.

These ground-nipples are actually switches which adjust the position of the rotating platforms.

Bobby Carrot is the kind of game the Spectrum is really good at, and this is a great example of the genre. The graphics are colourful and cute, and the game sports some great AY music that bounces along and gets stuck in your head after playing.

The 48k version suffers from the tiny play area, so the 128k is recommended.



The 48k version might have a teeny tiny play area, but at least it's surrounded by a whole bunch of pretty.

The puzzles are perhaps a little too easy to begin with - you'll quickly breeze through the first 20 levels with little problem, but there is a point where it becomes a real head-scratcher and truly challenges your forward planning.

The egg mode is another step up in difficulty, especially as you only have 2 lives, and is enough to make you stamp and curse as you make stupid mistakes that are entirely your fault.

The whole package is beautifully presented and it feels like a lot of effort has gone in to make it a quality product, which it is, so go and play it.

VERDICT

A fantastic puzzle game which is fun to play and highly polished. Vegetarians will love it!

Sunteam

www.sunteam.co.uk